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RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 0489
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 1195
RHEBAAA/DEPT OF ENERGY WASHDC
RUCPDOG/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHDC
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RHEFAAA/DIA WASHDC
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC 0664
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC 0580
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SIPDIS

STATE FOR SCA/CEN, DRL/ILCSR FOR TU DANG
DOL/ILAB FOR TINA MCCARTER

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: KAZAKHSTAN: UPDATE OF INFORMATION ON WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

REF: (A) 08 STATE 127488
(B) 08 ASTANA 1028
(C) 07 ASTANA 3256
(D) 06 ASTANA 891
(E) 05 ALMATY 3112
(F) 04 ALMATY 3206

¶1. SUMMARY: Per retel A, this cable provides updated information on Kazakhstan's compliance with international norms on the prevention of the worst forms of child labor. The cable updates reflets C, D, E, and F. This information is provided to assist in the determination of Kazakhstan's continued eligibility for benefits under the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP). Post concludes that the Kazakhstani government is meeting its obligations under the relevant ILO Conventions to prevent and punish illegal child labor practices. There is currently no justification for altering Kazakhstan's eligibility for the GSP on the basis of child labor issues. END SUMMARY.

¶2. Kazakhstan does not have an acute problem with the worst forms of child labor, although local and international NGOs active in the country report that child labor is used in the seasonal production of cotton and tobacco, primarily in Kazakhstan's southern regions. There are no comprehensive national statistics on the use of child labor in cotton and tobacco production, although NGO studies have found that over 70 percent of the children employed in these fields are from migrant families, primarily Uzbek and Kyrgyz. Children are generally not found doing hazardous jobs like heavy manufacturing, construction, or mining.

¶3. Kazakhstan is a member of the ILO Conventions "On the Worst Forms of Child Labor" and "On the Minimum Age for Admission to Employment," and other international agreements concerning child labor. Kazakhstani law forbids the worst forms of child labor. Kazakhstan is engaged in a number of efforts to combat the worst forms of child labor, in partnership with international organizations and NGOs. Government labor inspectors and NGOs play a key role in monitoring the observation of children's rights. The Ministry of Labor is responsible for enforcing child labor laws and for administrative offences punishable by fines; the Ministry of Interior is responsible for investigating criminal offenses. The Ministry of Labor reported no incidents involving illegal child

labor in the first ten months of 2008; government experts have acknowledged, however, that more needs to be done to combat child labor in agriculture.

¶4. International organizations such as the ILO, UNICEF, and UNDP provide the Government of Kazakhstan with technical assistance in combating problems of child labor. During 2005-2007, the Ministry of Labor and NGOs, supported by ILO-IPEX, completed a 3-year "Regional Program on the Worst Forms of Child Labor." In January 2006, the government established a Committee for Protection of Child Rights in the Ministry of Education and Science to implement national policy in the area of the protection of children's rights. In 2006, UNICEF began a pilot project entitled "Protection of Children's Rights and Development of a Mechanism for Monitoring Children's Rights," in partnership with the Ministry of Education and Science, Ministry of Labor and Social Protection, Human Rights Ombudsman's office, local governments, and NGOs. On another front, local government and law enforcement officers perform inspections to detect school truants.

¶5. In 2007, the government signed a two-year agreement with national employer associations in which the parties committed not to allow the use of forced labor and the worst forms of child labor, and to take active efforts to eradicate these forms of labor and develop alternative employment opportunities for children and their families. The Ministry of Education's 2007-2011 "Children of Kazakhstan" program addresses child labor issues and proposed pilot projects on alternative jobs for children and a series of Kazakh-language radio programs to raise awareness of the issue. Over the past two years, local NGOs have partnered with the ILO to

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implement 40 projects designed to prevent the worst forms of child labor in Kazakhstan.

¶6. COMMENT: Post is satisfied that the Government of Kazakhstan takes the issue of child labor seriously. While the problem of child labor among the migrant community remains a challenge, the government is making a credible effort to deal with the problem. Post recommends against any change to Kazakhstan GSP eligibility on the basis of child labor issues. END COMMENT.

HOAGLAND